

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Attached are two (2) sheets of drawings, which includes a replacement drawing of Fig. 1 and a new drawing of Fig. 7, to be placed on file for the above-identified patent application.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet of Fig. 1 and New Sheet of Fig. 7

REMARKS

Claims 1-17, 19-28 and 30-32 are pending in the current application. Claims 1, 2, 13 and 14 are in independent form. Claims 2, 8, 9, 13-15, 21, 23, 24 and 26 are amended. Claims 18 and 29 are cancelled. In view of the above amendments and following remarks, favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application is respectfully requested.

Initially, Applicants appreciate the Examiner's acknowledgment that all certified copies pertaining to foreign priority claimed under 35 U.S.C. § 119 have been received and the indication that the references submitted in the Information Disclosure Statement filed on September 7, 2004 have been considered.

I. ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 4, 21 and 23 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

II. DRAWINGS OBJECTION

The drawings stand objected to under 37 CFR §1.83(a) for not showing every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Namely, the rejection states that "...the inlet which is connected to a pre-treatment unit for carrying out a first liquid/gas separation, which pretreatment unit comprises an inlet cyclone separator arranged in the lower compartment in

claims 12, 17, 28 must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s)." Action, p. 2.

By the present Amendment, Applicants submit that the replacement sheet of Fig. 1 depicts a pre-treatment unit 3 connected to the inlet 2 in the lower compartment A.

Furthermore, Fig. 7 has been added to present application. Fig. 7 depicts the pre-treatment unit 3 having an inlet cyclone separator 23 therein. Support for Fig. 7 may be found on page 8, lines 4-15.

Thus, Applicants submit that the drawing objection has been overcome. Withdrawal is respectfully requested.

III. 35 U.S.C. §112, SECOND PARAGRAPH REJECTION

Claims 8, 9, 13, 14, 23, 24 and 26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite for failing to point out and distinctly claim the subject matter regarded as the invention.

By the present Amendment, Applicants submit that claims 8, 9, 13, 14, 23, 24 and 26 have been amended to correct the antecedent basis problem identified by the Examiner. Furthermore, claims 2, 15 and 21 have also been amended to correct antecedent basis problem and/or grammatical errors.

Thus, Applicants submit that the §112, second paragraph rejection to claims 8, 9, 13, 14, 23, 24 and 26 has been overcome. Withdrawal is respectfully requested.

IV. 35 U.S.C. §101 REJECTION

Claims 18 and 29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 because the claimed recitation of a use, without setting forth any steps involved in the process, results in an improper definition of a process.

By the present Amendment, Applicants submit that claims 18 and 29 have been cancelled. Thus, the rejection has been rendered moot.

V. CITED ART GROUNDS OF REJECTION

(A) *Claims 1, 2, 3, 5-7, 9, 13-16, 19, 20, 22, 24, 26 and 30-32 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Goodloe, U.S. Patent No. 2,521,785. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.*

i. INDEPENDENT CLAIM 1

Independent claim 1 is directed to a device for treating a gas/liquid mixture including (*inter alia*) a “recycling means for recycling the collected liquid from the collecting means to the lower compartment.” Applicants submit that the art cited in the rejection fails to teach, or suggest, the above features recited in independent claim 1.

a. GOODLOE

Referring to the annular well 25 shown in Fig. 1 of Goodloe (reproduced below), the rejection states that Goodloe teaches “...collecting means (25) for collecting in or downstream the agglomerating unit the liquid droplets which have broken through the agglomerating unit, and recycling

means for recycling the collected liquid from the collecting means to the lower compartment." Action, p. 5.

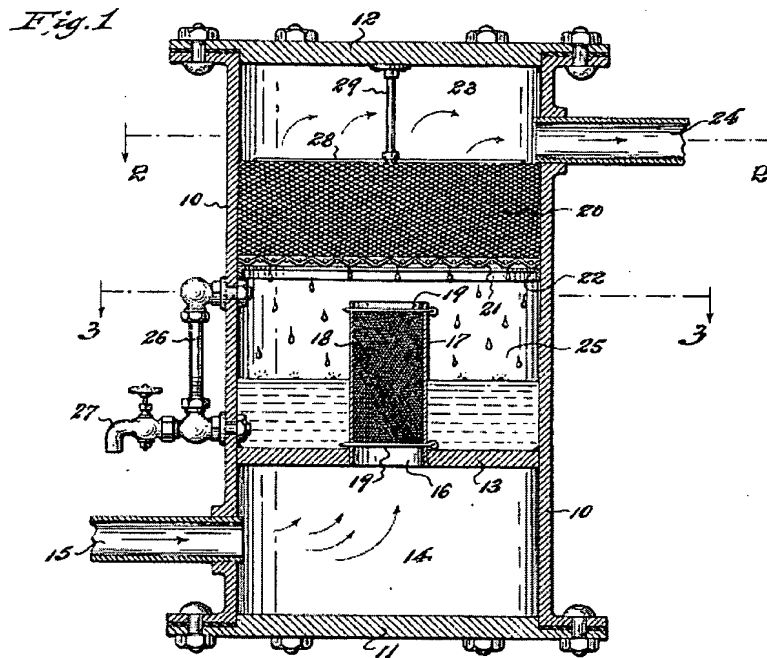


FIG. 1 OF GOODLOE

However, Goodloe teaches that,

The space within the interior of the casing 10 intermediate the partition wall 13 and the secondary separator mass 20, and around the upstanding housing member 17 which contains the primary separator mass 18, provides an annular well or sump 25 into which liquid, coalesced into drops by the separator masses, may fall by gravity and accumulate. Mounted on the exterior of the casing 10 so as to communicate with the interior of the well or sump 25 is a liquid level gauge 26, which is operative to indicate the depth of liquid which has accumulated in said well or sump. Coupled in connection with the lower end of said gauge 26 is a faucet or tap 27 through which the accumulated liquid may be drawn off from said well or sump when necessary.

Goodloe, col. 4, ll. 28-44.

Thus, the liquid collected by the annular well 25 from the primary separator mass 17 is removed from the casing 10 by the tap 27, not recycled from the well 25 to a lower compartment of the casing 10.

Furthermore, because the liquid collected by the annular well 25 is removed from the casing 10 by the tap 27, there is no motivation to include a “recycling means for recycling the collected liquid from the collecting means to the lower compartment” as recited in claim 1 in the device taught by Goodloe.

For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that Goodloe fails to teach, or suggest, a device for treating a gas/liquid mixture including a “recycling means for recycling the collected liquid from the collecting means to the lower compartment” as recited in claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection to independent claim 1, and claims 3, 5-7, 9, 19 and 24 at least by virtue of their dependency on independent claim 1.

ii. INDEPENDENT CLAIM 2

Independent claim 2 is directed to a device for treating a gas/liquid mixture including (*inter alia*) a “recycling means for recycling the collected liquid to the lower compartment from the collecting means.” Thus, Applicants submit that independent claim 2 is patentable over Goodloe for similar reasons as given above with respect to independent claim 1.

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection to independent claim 2, and claims 20, 22 and 30 at least by virtue of their dependency on claim 2.

iii. INDEPENDENT CLAIM 13

Independent claim 13 is directed to a method for treating a gas/liquid mixture in an upright vessel with a lower and upper compartment including (*inter alia*) "recycling the collected liquid to the lower compartment." Applicants submit that independent claim 13 is patentable over Goodloe for analogous reasons as given above with respect to independent claim 1.

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection to independent claim 13, and claims 15, 16 and 31 at least by virtue of their dependency on independent claim 13.

iv. INDEPENDENT CLAIM 14

Independent claim 14 is directed to a method for treating a gas/liquid mixture in an upright vessel with a lower and upper compartment including (*inter alia*) including "recycling the collected liquid to the lower compartment." Applicants submit that independent claim 14 is patentable over Goodloe for similar reasons as given above with respect to independent claim 1.

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection to independent claim 14, and claims 26 and 32 at least by virtue of their dependency on claim 14.

(B) Claims 1, 2, 3, 5-11, 14, 19, 20, 22, 25-27, 30 and 32 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by McEwan, U.S. Patent No. 4,767,424. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

i. INDEPENDENT CLAIM 1

Independent claim 1 is directed to a device for treating a gas/liquid mixture including (*inter alia*) a “recycling means for recycling the collected liquid from the collecting means to the lower compartment.” Applicants submit that the art cited in the rejection fails to teach, or suggest, the above features recited in independent claim 1.

a. MCEWAN

Referring to the lower part 4 of the column 1 shown in Fig. 1 of McEwan (reproduced below), the rejection states that McEwan teaches “...collecting means (4) for collecting in or downstream the agglomerating unit the liquid droplets which have broken through the agglomerating unit, and recycling means for recycling the collected liquid from the collecting means to the lower compartment.” Action, p. 6.

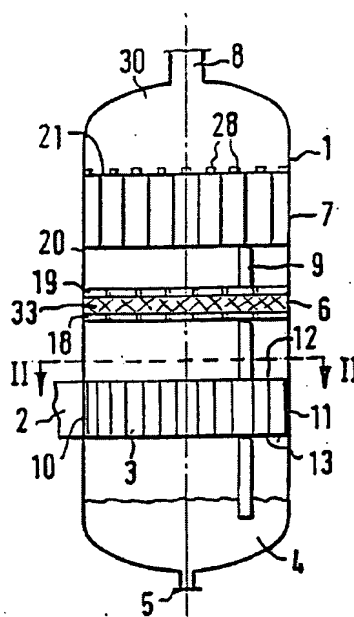


FIG. 1 OF McEWAN

However, McEwan teaches that “[a]t relatively low gas velocities the coalescer removes all liquid from the gas—the liquid showers down out of the coalescer and is discharged from the bottom of the column.” McEwan, col. 2, ll. 59-62.

Thus, similar to Goodloe, the liquid collected by the lower part 4 from the coalescer 6 is removed from the column 1 by the liquid outlet 5, not recycled from the part 4 to a lower compartment of the column 1.

Furthermore, because the liquid collected by the lower part 4 is removed from the column 1 by the liquid outlet 5, there is no motivation to include a “recycling means for recycling the collected liquid from the collecting means to the lower compartment” as recited in claim 1 in the column taught by McEwan.

For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that McEwan fails to teach, or suggest, a device for treating a gas/liquid mixture including a “recycling means for recycling the collected liquid from the collecting means to the lower compartment” as recited in claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection to independent claim 1, and claims 3, 5-11, 19 and 25 at least by virtue of their dependency on independent claim 1.

ii. INDEPENDENT CLAIM 2

Independent claim 2 is directed to a device for treating a gas/liquid mixture including (*inter alia*) a “recycling means for recycling the collected liquid to the lower compartment from the collecting means.” Applicants submit that independent claim 2 is patentable over McEwan for similar reasons as given above with respect to independent claim 1.

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection to independent claim 2, and claims 20, 22 and 30 at least by virtue of their dependency on claim 2.

iii. INDEPENDENT CLAIM 14

Independent claim 14 is directed to a method for treating a gas/liquid mixture in an upright vessel with a lower and upper compartment including (*inter alia*) including “recycling the collected liquid to the lower compartment.” Applicants submit that independent claim 14 is patentable

over McEwan for similar reasons as given above with respect to independent claim 1.

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection to independent claim 14, and claims 26, 27 and 32 at least by virtue of their dependency on claim 14.

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END OF REMARKS

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CONCLUSION

Accordingly, in view of the above, reconsideration of the objection and rejections, and allowance of each of claims 1-17, 19-28 and 30-32 in connection with the present application is earnestly solicited.

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§1.17 and 1.136(a), Applicant(s) hereby petition(s) for a two (2) month extension of time for filing a reply to the outstanding Office Action and submit the required \$460.00 extension fee herewith.

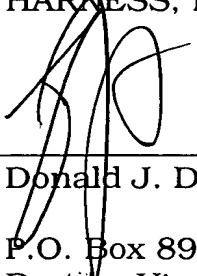
Should there be any matters that need to be resolved in the present application; the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number below.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-0750 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

HARNESSE, DICKEY, & PIERCE, P.L.C.

By

 #35094

Donald J. Daley, Reg. No. 34,313

P.O. Box 8910
Reston, Virginia 20195
(703) 668-8000

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Attachment: Replacement Sheet of Fig. 1 and New Sheet of Fig. 7